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mentioned. There is an admirable analysis of Calvinism, and an unusually clear picture of the moralists of the last century. Methodism also comes in for a full discussion, and the somewhat novel idea is advanced that, to comprehend the change in English thought marked by the religious movement of that sect, one must unite the work of Wesley and Adam Smith. The latter, in our author's opinion, transformed from morals all principles except that of sympathy, and this Wesley appropriated for his sect. Dr. Patten therefore maintains that Methodism and economics tended to create a non-moral state of mind, which has ever since been a marked characteristic of the English race, in spite of its conscientiousness. Dr. Patten's book is pervaded by a broad religious sentiment which finds frequent expression, but nowhere more forcibly than in these words with which he ends his book: "Not the laws of life, nor of reason, nor of economics, reveal the complete plan on which God works. . . . The narrower field of the old natural religion was due to the emphasis of God as Cause. But God as Life enters into many more relations with men, and his presence is revealed in many more ways. The whole of nature and the whole of man, active as well as passive, can be called upon for evidence of God as Life, and this evidence will contain all the elements that are contained in revealed religion, and will emphasize the same facts, hopes, and possibilities. Natural religion is not merely a religion of knowledge, nor is revealed religion merely a religion of faith. Nor does the one tell merely of a God in nature, and the other of a God incarnate. The principle of incarnation is an essential tendency in all life, and is revealed wherever the higher types come in contact with the lower. B. J. R.

"THE THEORY OF THE LEISURE CLASS."

ONE of the most curious books that has come to our table this season is Thorstein Veblen's "Theory of the Leisure Class."¹ He proposes to discuss the place and value of the

¹ Macmillan Company, 1899.

leisure class as an economic factor in modern life, but inasmuch as he finds atavism one of its most distinguishing characteristics, he is constrained to look back to various phases of barbaric culture to find the explanation of its second characteristic, "conspicuous waste," with which is naturally correlated "conspicuous leisure." The honorific functions of a barbaric or feudal community are warfare and priestly offices, and from these he deduces most of the phenomena that he discerns in the leisure classes of to-day, with a good deal of exaggeration and much amusing paradox. We shall best give an idea of the book by a few citations.

The early differentiation out of which the distinction between a leisure and a working class arises is a division maintained between men's and women's work in the lower stages of barbarism. Likewise the earliest form of ownership is the ownership of women by the "able-bodied men," though "there was undoubtedly some appropriation of useful articles before the custom of appropriating women arose." Then gradually accumulated property replaced "the trophies of predatory exploit as the conventional exponent of prepotence and success," and wealth acquired by transmission became more honorific than that acquired by the possessor's own effort.

But this wealth must be seen to be appreciated. Hence the necessity for "conspicuous leisure." "From the days of the Greek philosophers to the present" this leisure "has ever been recognized by thoughtful men as a prerequisite to a worthy, or a beautiful, or even a blameless life." "The performance of labor has been accepted as a conventional evidence of inferior force; therefore it comes itself, by a mental short cut, to be regarded as intrinsically base." So much so as "even to set aside the instinct of self-preservation." Hence the desire to consume time unproductively, and to give such evidence of this feat as quasi-scholarly and quasi-artistic accomplishments, and the acquirement of an artificially elaborated decorum. "Few of us can dissociate an offense against etiquette from a sense of the substantial

unworthiness of the offender," for "a knowledge of good form is *prima facie* evidence that that portion of the well-bred person's life which is not spent under the observation of the spectator has been worthily spent in acquiring accomplishments that are of no lucrative effect." "In this way, by the process vulgarly known as snobbery, a syncopated evolution of gentle birth and breeding is achieved in the case of a goodly number, . . . in no way substantially inferior to others who have had a longer but less arduous training in the pecuniary proprieties." "A divine assurance and an imperious complaisance as of one habituated to require subservience and to take no thought for the morrow is the birth-right and the criterion of the gentleman at his best."

But leisure may be vicarious also. The more persons one can maintain in conspicuous idleness the more honorable one becomes. The utility of a retinue of servants consists largely "in their conspicuous exemption from productive labor, and in the evidence which this exemption affords of the master's wealth and power." Men are preferred to women, "because obviously more powerful and more expensive." And of course the vicarious leisure of the wife or wives is honorific to their owner also, "though the leisure of the lady and of the lackey differs from the leisure of the gentleman in his own right, in that it is an occupation of an ostensibly laborious kind." Yet aptitude and acquired skill in the formal manifestation of the servile relation, rather than any work done, constitutes the chief element of ability in our highly paid servants, as well as one of the chief ornaments of the well-bred housewife." So that "domestic service may be said to be a spiritual rather than a mechanical function." The time and efforts of a well-to-do household "are required to be all spent in a performance of conspicuous leisure, in the way of calls, drives, clubs, sewing circles, sports, charity organizations, and other like social functions. Those persons whose time and energy are employed in these matters privately avow that all these observances, as well as the incidental attention to dress and other conspicuous consumption of time, are very irksome but altogether

unavoidable," while "living has grown so elaborate and cumbrous in the way of dwellings, furniture, bric-a-brac, wardrobe, and meals, that the consumers of these things cannot make way with them in the required manner without help" of hired persons—"a concession of physical comfort to the moral need of pecuniary decency."

This conspicuous consumption must be always for the master's honor. In men at a certain stage of culture drunkenness is honorific—never in women, who consume only for the benefit of their masters. So too in feasts. "The guest consumes vicariously for his host" of his conspicuous superfluity, and where the husband cannot afford leisure for himself he gets honor by the idleness of his wife, who remains his chattel in theory, for "the habitual rendering of vicarious leisure and consumption is the abiding mark of the un-free servant."

The purpose both of conspicuous leisure and conspicuous consumption is waste, but the latter is now becoming of greater utility in relative effectiveness, because it gives scope also to "the instinct of workmanship," hence the elaboration of a pecuniary standard of living which weighs with especial rigor on the scholarly class, as do also the pecuniary canons of taste, about which Mr. Veblen has a very clever chapter, with some rather bitter words on "the reputable waste of expenditure" in churches and ritual, "backed by the principle that vicarious consumption should conspicuously not conduce to the comfort of the vicarious consumer." "Therefore priestly vestments are notoriously expensive, ornate, and inconvenient. And in the cults where the priestly servitor of the divinity is not conceived to serve him in the capacity of consort, they are of an austere, comfortless fashion. And such it is felt that they should be."

"The rehearsal of the service grows more perfunctory as the cult grows in age and consistency, and this perfunctoriness of the rehearsal is very pleasing to the correct, devout taste—and with a good reason, for the fact of its being perfunctory goes to say pointedly that the master for whom it is

performed is exalted above the vulgar need of actually profitable service on the part of his servants. They are unprofitable servants, and there is an honorific implication for their master in their remaining unprofitable. It is needless to point out at this point the close analogy between the priestly office and the office of the footman. It is pleasing to our sense of what is fitting in either case to recognize in the obvious perfunctoriness of the service that it is *pro forma* execution only."

After this passage it will be needless to say that Mr. Veblen regards religion as an archaic survival. All that he says about it—and there is much too much—is to show, with a narrowness and blindness that is more pathetic than irritating, that he regards the clergy on earth and angels in heaven as a corps of servants, "their time and efforts being in great measure taken up with an industrially unproductive rehearsal of the meritorious characteristics and exploits of the divinity." He is at once more clever and more agreeable when speaking of the conventions of dress that find delight in the glow of a silk hat or a patent-leather shoe, and eschew with horror the equally beautiful glow of a threadbare sleeve; or in his remarks on pets, among whom he distinguishes the dog as "the filthiest of domestic animals in his person and the nastiest in his habits," for which "he makes up in a servile fawning attitude toward his master, and a readiness to inflict damage and discomfort on all else." Since he affords play to the propensity for mastery, is expensive, and commonly of no use, "he holds a well-assured place in men's regard as a thing of good repute."

It is hardly worth while to extend this already long review. The reader will get from the extracts we have given a sufficient idea of the book, much of which is excellent fooling, much of it just irony, and much of it a vicious attack on Christian ideals. It is not worth reading for instruction, in spite of its assumption of economic terminology; but there is an element of truth in its satire, and there is a taking incisiveness in some of its epigrammatic statements. It is to be read for amusement, and in that spirit

we have reviewed it here at a length that its serious value is far from justifying.

B. W. W.

A NEW CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY.

A CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. By Francis Newton Thorpe. Two volumes. New York: Harper Brothers. 1899.

The title of this book is hardly an adequate index of its contents. No one need look in these volumes for an account of the constitutional development of the federal government or for any treatment of the statute law or judicial decisions pertaining to the juristic domain usually associated with a work of this character. Mr. Thorpe finds the materials for his narrative in other quarters. He thinks that the national consciousness and the progressive growth of American governmental ideals have left their impress most directly and clearly in the series of State constitutions. Here one finds records more closely reflective of the spirit of the people than in the federal Constitution. The commonwealths, as the people responded to different waves of feeling or were forced to harmonize their government with the changed conditions of economic and social life, modified from time to time the fundamental law under which they lived. Apart from this accurate reflection of the ethics of the people one gets, too, in the State constitutions a broader outline of the whole content of the national life than the federal Constitution can ever give. Such is the thesis of the author, and in working it out he can congratulate himself that what he has lost in the matter of verbal accuracy he has gained in the novelty of his subject.

Naturally a subject so vast as this must be placed under certain limitations. It would be impossible in two volumes to summarize the contents and the changes in the successive constitutions of all the commonwealths. It would be almost as difficult to take up all the subjects discussed even in a few of them. There are fields of political energy that he does not touch at all. He confines himself to matters relating to the suffrage, the slavery question, education, the conflicting interests of the town and country populations. In